

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached sheet of drawings include changes to Fig. 13, to replace the original sheet 6/9.

In Fig. 13, reference number 530 is replaced by reference number 531.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

Remarks

Claims 1-30 were pending. Claims 1, 7-10, 13, 22-25, and 28-29 have been amended. Claims 31 and 32 have been added. Support for the amendments and new claims can be found in the original claims, e.g., claims 8, 13, and 18, and the specification, e.g., Fig. 7. Accordingly, claims 1-32 are now pending. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added by way of the foregoing amendments.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 8, 11, 13, 18-19, 22 and 25-27 contain allowable subject matter.

Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and passage of the claims to allowance.

Specification

The specification has been amended to attend to informalities of grammar and syntax. Support for the amendments to the specification can be found in original figures 1, 2, 7, 10, and 13. In addition, the specification has been amended to correct for obvious errors in the description of the original figures. Applicants respectfully submit that these amendments do not introduce new matter.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has indicated that the non-patent literature listed on the Form PTO-1449 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement mailed March 21, 2002 was not considered because copies were not supplied. Under separate cover, Applicants submit copies of the published versions of the corresponding cited pending applications. Applicants renew the request for consideration of these references.

Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR § 1.83(a) as allegedly not showing "a loading chamber comprising a vessel enclosing the entire length of optical fiber", as is recited in claim 10. Applicants respectfully submit that the embodiment shown in Fig. 4 of the present

application illustrates a loading chamber comprising a vessel enclosing the entire length of optical fiber.

The drawings were further objected to under 37 CFR § 1.84(p)(4) "because reference character '122' has been used to designate both high-sensitivity regions in Fig. 1c and vents in Fig. 4." The same objection was made regarding element "120" as allegedly designating "an inlet and a high-sensitivity region in Figs. 4 and 1c respectively."

Applicants are confused by the above objection because there is no "figure 1c" provided or described in the present application. Applicants do not know what figure the examiner is referring to.

In any event, the present specification at page 12 describes vent or outlet 122 and 222. The specification at page 29 describes "hydrogen loaded selected portion 722." On page 12, the specification describes gas inlet 120 and 220. Applicants respectfully submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be confused by these reference numerals and descriptions. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

In addition, Fig. 13 is sought to be amended. Specifically, Fig. 13 incorrectly identified a bolt hole with the reference number 530. This reference number has been replaced by reference number 531. The accompanying specification at page 24 has also been amended above to reflect this correction.

§ 112 Rejections

Claims 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 23 and 30 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the following rejections were made.

In claims 7 and 9, the term "the first tube" lacks antecedent basis -

In claim 10, the term "the heating member" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 12, the term "the vessel" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 16, the term "the mechanism" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 23, the term "the pressure seal" lacks antecedent basis.

In claim 30, the term "the advancing mechanism" lacks antecedent basis.

Applicants have amended claims 7, 9, 10, 23 and 28 to correct for antecedent basis errors. Regarding claims 12 and 16, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10 (from which claim 12 depends) and claim 15 (from which claim 16 depends) provide proper antecedent basis.

In summary, Applicants submit that the rejection of claims 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 23 and 30 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, has been overcome, and that the rejection should be withdrawn.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1-6, 14, 17, 20-21, 24 and 28-30 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Cullen et al (US Patent 6,146,713). Further, claims 1-5, 10, 15, 12, 20-21 and 28-30 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Brennan, III et al (US Patent 6,311,524).

Without acquiescing to the propriety of the rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that present claims 1 and 28, and their dependent claims, are novel over the cited art because the cited art does not disclose "at least one pressure seal in contact with at least one end section of the selected portion of the optical fiber." As the cited art does not disclose the claimed "pressure seal" feature, claims 1-30 are therefore in condition for allowance.

Regarding new claims 31 and 32, these claims recite the features of original claims 18 and 13, respectively, and should be allowable for at least the reasons mentioned in the office action at page 6.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

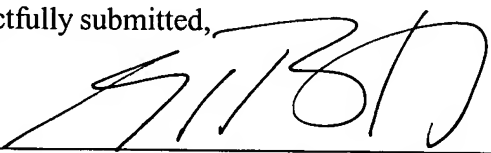
Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

1/6/04
Date

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